

# WEST VIRGINIANS ARE READY FOR A NEW DIRECTION

*Under the leadership of President Bush and his Republican allies in Congress, life has become more difficult for West Virginians. Here are some of the ways that life has become less affordable and secure in West Virginia. Democrats are working for real security, better jobs, college access for all, energy independence, affordable health care, and retirement security. It's time for a new direction in West Virginia.*

## **INCOME: WEST VIRGINIANS ARE BARELY EARNING MORE TODAY THAN THEY WERE FIVE YEARS AGO**

- In 2000, the median income in West Virginia was \$33,829.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2005, the median income in West Virginia was \$35,467, a modest increase of 4.8 percent.<sup>2</sup>

## **HEALTH CARE: THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED IN WEST VIRGINIA HAS GROWN UNDER BUSH REPUBLICANS**

- In 2000, West Virginia had 256,000 adults without insurance (14.2 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- In 2005, West Virginia had 322,000 adults without insurance (17.9 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- West Virginia had 38,614 children benefit from the SCHIP Program.<sup>5</sup>

## **EDUCATION: THE COST OF COLLEGE CONTINUES TO RISE IN WEST VIRGINIA**

- In 2001, tuition at a public four-year institution in West Virginia was \$7,287.<sup>6</sup> In 2005, it was \$9,450, a 30 percent increase.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2001, tuition at a private four-year institution in West Virginia was \$18,338.<sup>8</sup> In 2005, it was \$19,067, a 4 percent increase.<sup>9</sup>
- Number of West Virginians affected by the lapse of the College Tuition Tax Deduction – 16,929<sup>10</sup>
- Number of West Virginians affected by the lapse of the Educator Expenses Tax Deduction – 15,677<sup>11</sup>

## **GAS PRICES: THE HIGH COST OF GAS CONTINUES TO BE A BURDEN FOR WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS**

- In 2001, the average cost of gas in West Virginia was \$1.446 a gallon.<sup>12</sup>
- Today the average cost of gas in West Virginia is \$2.310 a gallon.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2001, the average annual cost of gas for a household in West Virginia was \$1,757.<sup>14</sup>
- Today the average annual cost of gas for a household in West Virginia is \$2,824, \$1,056 (59.8 percent) more than it was in 2001.<sup>15</sup>

## **SOCIAL SECURITY: WEST VIRGINIANS DON'T WANT AN END TO SOCIAL SECURITY**

- Number of Social Security Beneficiaries in West Virginia – 407,460<sup>16</sup>
- Average Monthly Benefit per Beneficiary in West Virginia – \$843<sup>17</sup>

## **IRAQ, TROOPS AND VETERANS: WEST VIRGINIANS ON THE FRONT LINES**

- Number of West Virginians killed in Iraq – 19<sup>18</sup>
- Number of West Virginians wounded in Iraq – 145<sup>19</sup>
- Number of West Virginians killed in Afghanistan – 6<sup>20</sup>
- Number of West Virginians wounded in Afghanistan – 2<sup>21</sup>
- Number of Veterans in West Virginia – 188,101<sup>22</sup>

## **REPUBLICANS CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR GIVEAWAYS FOR A WEALTHY MINORITY WHILE IGNORING WEST VIRGINIA'S MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS**

- Only 103 estates in West Virginia paid an Estate Tax in 2004.<sup>23</sup>
- Only 31 estates in West Virginia will benefit from the Estate Tax cut in 2009.<sup>24</sup>
- In contrast, 59,000 workers in West Virginia would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage.<sup>25</sup>

## **TAX CUTS: BUSH TAX POLICIES BENEFIT THE WEALTHIEST WEST VIRGINIANS**

**The Bush tax cuts have overwhelmingly benefited the wealthiest West Virginians.**

- In 2001, the richest one percent of West Virginia residents each received an average of \$1,618 in tax cuts, while middle class West Virginia residents received only \$317.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2006, the richest one percent of West Virginia residents will receive an average of \$16,747 in tax cuts, while middle class West Virginia residents will only receive \$574.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2010, under the Bush tax plan, the richest one percent of West Virginia residents will each receive an average of \$30,509 in tax cuts, while middle class West Virginia residents will only receive \$674.<sup>28</sup>

**The richest West Virginians receive an ever-growing share of the Bush tax cut.**

- In 2001, the richest West Virginians received 4.6 percent of the Bush tax cut, while the middle class received 17.9 percent of the tax cut.<sup>29</sup>
- But, in 2006, the richest West Virginians will get 17.2 percent of the Bush tax cut, while the middle class will get 11.7 percent of the tax cut.<sup>30</sup>
- And, in 2010, the richest West Virginians will get 30.8 percent of the Bush tax cut, while the middle class will get 13.4 percent of the tax cut.<sup>31</sup>

### **Bush capital gains and dividend tax cuts overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest West Virginians.**

- In 2010, the richest West Virginians will receive an average of \$4,320 from the Bush capital gains and dividend tax cuts. That means the richest West Virginians will be getting over 39.8 percent of all of the tax cut benefit.<sup>32</sup>
- In contrast, in 2010, middle class West Virginians will receive an average of \$37 from the Bush capital gains and dividend tax cuts. That's just 6.8 percent of the benefit going to the middle class.<sup>33</sup>

### **SOURCES**

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- 6: National Center for Education Statistics, "Digest of Education Statistics 2001"
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- 24: United for a Fair Economy [[www.faireconomy.org/estatetax/ETDataByState.html](http://www.faireconomy.org/estatetax/ETDataByState.html)]. This estimate is based upon current law where the estate tax threshold is slated to rise to 3.5 million in 2009.

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